

From: ["Bryan, David" </O=EXCHANGELABS/OU=EXCHANGE ADMINISTRATIVE:GROUP \(FYDIBOHF23SPDLT\)/CN=RECIPIENTS/CN=DE67FD66319E475AA76B7FB0C64D64B5-BRYAN.DAVID>](mailto:'Bryan, David' </O=EXCHANGELABS/OU=EXCHANGE ADMINISTRATIVE:GROUP (FYDIBOHF23SPDLT)/CN=RECIPIENTS/CN=DE67FD66319E475AA76B7FB0C64D64B5-BRYAN.DAVID>)  
To: ["R7 Daily Digest" <INBOX>](mailto:'R7 Daily Digest' <INBOX>)  
CC:  
Date: 7/28/2014 2:42:35 PM  
Subject: OPA Daily Digest for 7/28/14

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## OPA Daily Digest for 7/28/14

### Congressional Inquiries:

**Sen. Charles Grassley** (Iowa) – Letter – 7/24/14: Abandoned school site contaminated with asbestos in Letts, Iowa. Due: 7/24/14. Contact: LaTonya Sanders, 7555 (open)

**Sen. Claire McCaskill** (Mo.); **Sen. Roy Blunt** (Mo.); **Rep. William Lacy Clay** (Mo.); **Rep. Ann Wagner** (Mo.) – Letter – 7/18/14: West Lake Landfill. Due: 8/1/14. Contact: LaTonya Sanders, 7555 (open)

### State Government Inquiries:

**Sen. Gary Romine, Sen. Doug Libla, Sen. Gina Walsh, Rep. Paul Wieland, Rep. Paul Fitzwater, Rep. TJ McKenna** – Letter – 7/25/14: Express concerns about characterization of many areas of Missouri as “contaminated.” Due: 8/7/14. Contact: Ben Washburn, 7364 (open)

### Press Inquiries:

*Example:* **KSMU Radio** – Samuel Crowe – 12/19/11: Questions regarding what makes Energy Star appliances different from other appliances. Contact: David Bryan, 7433 (open)

**West Plains Daily Quill (Mo.)** – Denise Vaughn – 7/28/14: Request for information regarding Coastal Energy, Willow Springs, Mo., July inspection. Contact: David Bryan, 7433 (open)

### Environmental Stories:

*Example:* **St. Louis Post-Dispatch - Missouri offers deal in reservoir failure** - 5/13/08 - Missouri environmental regulators have proposed a settlement with St. Louis-based AmerenUE stemming from last year's Taum Sauk reservoir collapse. Settlement negotiations are ongoing and confidential.

<http://www.stltoday.com/stltoday/news/stories.nsf/missouristateneews/story/31F378F25B216B80862572430015B7BA?OpenDocument>

Also in St. Louis Business Journal, Columbia (Mo.) Daily Tribune, KTVI Ch. 2 (St. Louis)

NOTE: Paywall issues may keep you from seeing this article. Full text is included at the end of this email.

**KSDK Ch. 5 St. Louis - Feds weigh in on Bridgeton Landfill concerns** - 7/26/14 - A branch of the Centers for Disease Control is now weighing in on the radioactive West Lake Landfill and the neighboring Bridgeton Landfill after a recent report from the National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health raised concerns for firefighters near the landfills.

<http://www.ksdk.com/story/news/local/2014/07/26/cdc-bridgeton-landfill-west-lake-landfill/13220013/>

**KMOX Radio St. Louis - Court Cases Could Come Down to the Wire for Coal Ash Landfill Opponents** - 7/25/14 - It's the 11th hour for opponents of a coal ash landfill planned less than an hour away from St. Louis. "My thought is, we're in a better place than ever right now to actually stop this landfill," says Patricia Schuba, President of the Labadie Environmental Organization.

<http://www.kansascity.com/news/local/article810669.html>

**KSDK Ch. 5 St. Louis - Air quality tested again at Bridgeton Landfill** - 7/28/14 - The fifth round of air quality testing will begin Monday at the Bridgeton Landfill. The landfill has been smoldering for years, and this week 40 air monitors will gather information about what's going on in the air around the landfill.

<http://www.ksdk.com/story/news/local/2014/07/28/bridgeton-landfill-air-quality-testing/13260613/>

**Des Moines Register - Editorial: Iowa needs to explore alternate energy sources** - 7/27/14 - Regulated utilities have lately exhibited concern that this enthusiasm for alternative energy may threaten their monopoly status. And they have asserted themselves in defense of their turf.

<http://www.desmoinesregister.com/story/opinion/editorials/2014/07/28/editorial-solar-energy/13256725/>

NOTE: Paywall issues may keep you from seeing this article. Full text is included at the end of this email.

**Kansas City Star - Planned restrictions don't float with fans of Ozark rivers** - 7/26/14 - A half century later, the National Park Service has poked that sore again with new rules about what people can and cannot do in the Ozark National Scenic Riverways down along the Current and Jacks Fork rivers. Officials say a carte blanche over the past few years threatens the park's natural beauty and wilderness. <http://www.kansascity.com/news/local/article810669.html>

**Columbia Missourian - LEO Appeals 'Illegal' BOZA Decision on Ash Landfill** - 7/26/14 - Charging that a local county zoning board made an "illegal" decision, an environmental group has appealed to circuit court a ruling that a proposed Ameren coal ash landfill would meet zoning regulations. [http://www.emissourian.com/local\\_news/county/leo-appeals-illegal-boza-decision-on-ash-landfill/article\\_4d5cc0fe-4010-5a1b-9b98-ce966c7df571.html](http://www.emissourian.com/local_news/county/leo-appeals-illegal-boza-decision-on-ash-landfill/article_4d5cc0fe-4010-5a1b-9b98-ce966c7df571.html)

**St. Louis Post-Dispatch - Promises of easier nuclear construction fall short** - 7/28/14 - The U.S. nuclear industry has started building its first new plants in decades using prefabricated Lego-like blocks meant to save time and money and revive the once promising energy source. [http://www.stltoday.com/news/national/promises-of-easier-nuclear-construction-fall-short/article\\_2150572c-d475-5433-83ca-f04c8ba5d46e.html](http://www.stltoday.com/news/national/promises-of-easier-nuclear-construction-fall-short/article_2150572c-d475-5433-83ca-f04c8ba5d46e.html)

**Dubuque Telegraph Herald - Editorial: Branstad's nix of solar grant disappointing** - 7/18/14 - Sometime this spring, Branstad's enthusiasm for solar energy wilted. The Branstad administration surrendered the \$1 million grant. What explanation did the governor give at the time for rejecting a million dollars to help achieve the goals he had been talking about for years? None. <http://www.desmoinesregister.com/story/opinion/abetteriowa/2014/07/28/dubuque-telegraph-herald-branstads-nix-of-solar-grant-disappointing/13263263/>

**Planet Ark - Neonic insecticides widespread in Iowa waters -study** - 7/24/14 - A class of insecticides popular with corn and soybean farmers in the U.S. Midwest but feared as a factor in the decline of U.S. honey bee colonies and other crop pollinators, has been found to be widespread through rivers and streams in Iowa, according to a government study released on Thursday. <http://planetark.org/enviro-news/item/71939>

**Roll Call - 'Good Ideas' Are Point of EPA Carbon Emissions Hearings, McCarthy Says** - 7/28/14 - "We expect good feedback from these sessions," EPA administrator Gina McCarthy told reporters Monday about this week's listening sessions on the agency's proposal to regulate carbon emissions from existing power plants. "No good ideas should be off the table." <http://blogs.rollcall.com/energy-xtra/epa-carbon-emissions-rule-hearings-mccarthy/>

**Roll Call - FERC Pulled Into House GOP's Questions About EPA Rule** - 7/28/14 - Republican concerns about the potential closure of coal power plants — and questions about the nation's electricity infrastructure — will be on display Tuesday as a House Energy and Commerce subcommittee hears from the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission on the EPA's proposal to regulate carbon emissions from existing power plants. <http://blogs.rollcall.com/energy-xtra/ferc-epa-house-hearing-coal-grid/>

**The Hill - EPA heads into battle on climate** - 7/28/14 - The Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) is heading into a battle with the coal industry next week over its landmark climate regulations. More than 300,000 comments already have been submitted to the EPA since it unveiled its proposal on June 2. <http://thehill.com/policy/energy->

[environment/213463-week-ahead-epa-heads-into-battle-on-climate-rule](#)

**The Hill - Greens expect 'busloads' to support EPA climate rule at hearings** - 7/28/14 - Environmental groups and their supporters are planning to come out in droves this week to public hearings to support the Environmental Protection Agency's (EPA) proposal to limit power plant carbon pollution. <http://thehill.com/policy/energy-environment/213495-greens-expect-busloads-to-support-epa-climate-rule-at-hearings>

**Farm Futures - Renewable Fuel Standard Rollback Still Appears Likely: NBB** - 7/25/14 - The National Biodiesel Board on Thursday said talks between the White House and a group of Senate Democrats appears to indicate that a Renewable Fuel Standard rollback is still on the horizon as the U.S. EPA continues to delay the release of final 2014 volumes under the mandate. <http://farmfutures.com/story-renewable-fuel-standard-rollback-still-appears-likely-nbb-0-115530>

**Bloomberg - Energy Week Ahead: Sold-Out Hearings for EPA Climate Plan** - 7/27/14 - The nation gets its chance this week to blast or praise the Environmental Protection Agency's sweeping plan to cut climate-warming emissions by 2030. <http://www.bloomberg.com/news/2014-07-28/energy-week-ahead-sold-out-hearings-for-epa-climate-plan.html>

**National Journal - EPA Chief Won't Ditch the Waters Rule, But She Is Digging for Answers** - 7/27/14 - Gina McCarthy is reaching out to critics in the farm community and pledging to respond to their concerns. <http://www.nationaljournal.com/outside-influences/epa-chief-won-t-ditch-the-waters-rule-but-she-is-digging-for-answers-20140727>

**National Review - Mark Levin: Not Just the IRS — the EPA Spoils E-mails Too** - 7/27/14 - Those who pay attention to the Obama administration know that the practice of hiding information, and of improper treatment of electronic records, is hardly confined to the Internal Revenue Service. The Environmental Protection Agency has been particularly abusive. <http://www.nationalreview.com/corner/383880/mark-levin-not-just-irs-epa-spoils-e-mails-too-quin-hillyer>

**Huffington Post (blog) - Wishful Thinking About Natural Gas** - 7/28/14 - Sometimes you can fight fire with fire, but the evidence suggests that this isn't one of those times. Under current conditions, the increased availability and decreased price of natural gas are likely to lead to an increase in U.S. greenhouse gas emissions. [http://www.huffingtonpost.com/naomi-oreskes/natural-gas-emissions-climate-change\\_b\\_5626466.html](http://www.huffingtonpost.com/naomi-oreskes/natural-gas-emissions-climate-change_b_5626466.html)

**Wall Street Journal - Report Says EPA Fails to Stem Methane Gas Emissions From Pipelines** - 7/25/14 - The Environmental Protection Agency is failing to control leaks of methane, a potent greenhouse gas, from the nation's natural-gas pipelines, the agency's inspector general said Friday. <http://online.wsj.com/articles/report-says-epa-fails-to-control-methane-emissions-from-pipelines-1406305040>

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**Climate Central - Warming Threatens Roads, Ports and Planes, Report Says** - 7/28/14 - The transportation sector is a major contributor to climate-changing carbon dioxide emissions, and, worldwide, it's also one of the most vulnerable sectors to the effects of climate change, according to a new report. <http://www.climatecentral.org/news/climate-change-a-threat-to-roads-ports-and-planes-report-says-17824>

**EcoWatch - Big Polluters Cry Wolf Over EPA Plan to Fight Climate Change and Protect Human Health** - 7/28/14 - The big polluters oppose the EPA's effort to rein in the largest source of carbon pollution in our nation. They would rather protect the carbon loophole than do what it takes to safeguard public health and stabilize the climate. <http://ecowatch.com/2014/07/28/polluters-cry-wolf-epa-plan-to-fight-climate-change-protect-health/>

**Pro Publica - Under Water: The EPA's Struggle to Combat Pollution** - 7/24/14 - For years, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency has been frustrated in its efforts to pursue hundreds of cases of water pollution. Efforts in Congress to clarify the EPA's powers have been defeated. And two Supreme Court decisions have done little to decide the question. <http://www.propublica.org/article/under-water-the-epas-struggle-to-combat-pollution>

**Reuters - Panel's report likely to tie farm antibiotics to human resistance** - 7/24/14 - A White House advisory committee is expected to acknowledge the link between antimicrobial resistance in humans and livestock being fed antibiotics when it issues its report in the next few weeks, according to the transcript of a committee meeting held earlier this month. <http://in.reuters.com/article/2014/07/23/usa-congress-antibiotics-idINL2N0PT2LN20140723>

**The Motley Fool - The EPA Just Boosted a Key Growth Strategy for Clean Energy Fuels** - 7/27/14 - Quick! What's the first thing that comes to mind when you hear the word "biofuels"? I'll bet you thought of ethanol and biodiesel, but those are so 2013. <http://www.fool.com/investing/general/2014/07/27/the-epa-just-boosted-a-key-growth-strategy-for-cle.aspx>

**Inside Climate - Obama Coal Sales to Cost Society Billions in Global-Warming Damage, Study Says** - 7/28/14 - Greenpeace estimates that coal leases approved under Obama would impose future costs of between \$52 billion and \$530 billion. <http://insideclimatenews.org/carbon-copy/20140728/obama-coal-sales-cost-society-billions-global-warming-damage-study-says>

**Greenwire - Rising temperatures, ozone spell trouble for key food crops** - 7/28/14 - Global warming and smoggy air will likely make it more difficult to feed a growing population, according to a new study led by researchers from the Massachusetts Institute of Technology. <http://www.eenews.net/greenwire/stories/1060003611/>

**Greenwire - McCarthy says utility rule achievable, even for coal states** - 7/28/14 - With hearings on her agency's flagship climate change proposal set to kick off this week in four cities, U.S. EPA Administrator Gina McCarthy today framed the power plant proposal as a boon to the economy as well as to the environment. <http://www.eenews.net/greenwire/stories/1060003626/>

**Greenwire - House Republican compares climate, coal rules to 'terrorism'** - 7/28/14 - Pennsylvania Rep. Mike Kelly lashed out against U.S. EPA regulations today during a speech at a conservative think tank, where he said environmental regulations would keep coal suppliers on the sidelines, suggesting that was a form of terrorism. <http://www.eenews.net/greenwire/stories/1060003625/>

**Greenwire - Judge orders EPA to set standards for 3 toxins** - 7/28/14 - A federal judge ordered U.S. EPA on Friday to set air standards for three hazardous air pollutants, ruling that the agency is long overdue in meeting Clean Air Act requirements. <http://www.eenews.net/greenwire/stories/1060003612/>

**Greenwire - Poorest communities are least resilient to weather extremes -- study** - 7/28/14 - As extreme weather events likely connected to the planet's warming climate become increasingly common, low-income communities are positioned to suffer the worst consequences during the aftermath of natural disasters, write the authors of a report from the Center for American Progress called "One Storm Shy of Despair." <http://www.eenews.net/climatewire/stories/1060003545/>

**BNA - House Republicans Set to Question FERC On Grid Impacts of EPA's Power Plant Rule** - 7/25/14 - Members of the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission will be grilled July 29 by a House subcommittee on exactly how much input they have had in the development of the Environmental Protection Agency's proposed rule to reduce carbon emissions from existing power plants. [http://news.bna.com/deln/DELNWB/split\\_display.adp?fedfid=50571361&vname=dennotallissues&jd=a0f3v5g0c9&split=0](http://news.bna.com/deln/DELNWB/split_display.adp?fedfid=50571361&vname=dennotallissues&jd=a0f3v5g0c9&split=0)

**BNA - Citing Potential Cost, Ethanol Industry Opposes Inclusion in Crude-by-Rail Rule** - 7/25/14 - Ethanol producers are pushing back against their inclusion in a Transportation Department rule meant to address a fiery spate of crude-by-rail crashes, a decision the renewable fuel industry says could cost it more than \$1 billion. [http://news.bna.com/deln/DELNWB/split\\_display.adp?fedfid=50571354&vname=dennotallissues&jd=a0f3v5a8g0&split=0](http://news.bna.com/deln/DELNWB/split_display.adp?fedfid=50571354&vname=dennotallissues&jd=a0f3v5a8g0&split=0)

**BNA - Defense Department Fuel Solicitation Seeks Biofuels for First Time, EIA Says** - 7/25/14 - The Defense Department's most recent bulk fuel solicitation includes a request for military-specification diesel and jet fuel made with biofuels, the Energy Information Administration said July 25. [http://news.bna.com/deln/DELNWB/split\\_display.adp?fedfid=50571355&vname=dennotallissues&jd=a0f3v5a9t7&split=0](http://news.bna.com/deln/DELNWB/split_display.adp?fedfid=50571355&vname=dennotallissues&jd=a0f3v5a9t7&split=0)

**BNA - Quick Action on NRC Waste Confidence Rule Urged by House Energy, Commerce Panel** - 7/25/14 - A House committee asked the Nuclear Regulatory Commission to act quickly on its waste confidence rule regarding the environmental impacts associated with spent nuclear fuel. [http://news.bna.com/deln/DELNWB/split\\_display.adp?fedfid=50571348&vname=dennotallissues&jd=a0f3v4v3y3&split=0](http://news.bna.com/deln/DELNWB/split_display.adp?fedfid=50571348&vname=dennotallissues&jd=a0f3v4v3y3&split=0)

**BNA - Small Businesses Favor Clean Water Act Protections** - 7/25/14 - Seven in 10 small businesses said in a poll done in early June that clean water is necessary for jobs and the economy. Moreover, the poll showed that four in five of these businesses back federal protections for drinking water sources and wetlands. [http://news.bna.com/deln/DELNWB/split\\_display.adp?fedfid=50571356&vname=dennotallissues&jd=a0f3v5f3n4&split=0](http://news.bna.com/deln/DELNWB/split_display.adp?fedfid=50571356&vname=dennotallissues&jd=a0f3v5f3n4&split=0)

**Inside EPA - EPA Sees Administrative, Legal Hurdles For Novel Water Funding Pilot** - 7/28/14 - Even though Congress may not fund the recently enacted water infrastructure financing pilot program in the upcoming fiscal year, EPA officials are identifying a series of administrative challenges they face in implementing the program and are gathering input from municipal and utility officials on how to interpret the legislative language. <http://insideepa.com/201407282477958/EPA-Daily-News/Daily-News/epa-sees-administrative-legal-hurdles-for-novel-water-funding-pilot/menu-id-95.html>

**Inside EPA - White House Touts Federal GHG Cuts** - 7/25/14 - The White House says federal agencies have made significant progress in the past year toward meeting goals set in 2009 to cut greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions, increase use of renewable energy and boost sustainable performance. <http://insideepa.com/201407262477936/EPA-Blog/News-Briefs/white-house-touts-federal-ghg-cuts/menu-id-97.html>

**Inside EPA - Former RA Urges High-Level ESPS Engagement** - 7/25/14 - A former EPA regional administrator (RA) is advising states to focus their advocacy regarding EPA's proposal to cut greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions from existing power plants on top agency and administration officials. <http://insideepa.com/201407252477814/EPA-Blog/News-Briefs/former-ra-urges-high-level-esps-engagement/menu-id-97.html>

**Inside EPA - Inside EPA - Equity Advocates Warn EPA Power Plant Climate Rule Contains 'Fatal Flaws'** - 7/25/14 - A broad spectrum of environmental justice advocates are warning that EPA's landmark proposed rule to limit greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions from existing power plants does not adequately protect economically disadvantaged communities and minorities. <http://insideepa.com/201407252477815/EPA-Daily-News/Daily-News/equity-advocates-warn-epa-power-plant-climate-rule-contains-fatal-flaws/menu-id-95.html>

**Inside EPA - Amid Uncertainty EPA Sends Rule Banning SSM Exemptions To OMB** - 7/25/14 - EPA has sent its final rule banning state exemptions from air emissions limits during periods of startup, shutdown and malfunction (SSM) for White House Office of Management and Budget (OMB) review. <http://insideepa.com/201407252477816/EPA-Daily-News/Daily-News/amid-uncertainty-epa-sends-rule-banning-ssm-exemptions-to-omb/menu-id-95.html>

**Inside EPA - Ethanol Industry Blasts DOE E85 Data** - 7/25/14 - The ethanol industry is harshly criticizing the Department of Energy (DOE) for providing EPA with what it calls inaccurate data on the availability of fuel blends containing 85 percent ethanol (E85). <http://cleanenergyreport.com/201407252477886/Clean-Energy-Report-Blog/Clean-Energy-Wire/ethanol-industry-blasts-doe-e85-data/menu-id-204.html>

**Inside EPA - CSIS Assesses Economic, Energy Impacts Of ESPS** - 7/25/14 - The Center for Strategic & International Studies (CSIS) is out with a preliminary analysis of EPA's power plant climate rule, finding that it will help continue the natural gas boom as well as the shrinkage of coal-fired power. <http://cleanenergyreport.com/201407252477820/Clean-Energy-Report-Blog/Clean-Energy-Wire/csis-assesses-economic-energy-impacts-of-esps/menu-id-204.html>

**Inside EPA - EPA Faces Increasing Calls To Address 'At-Risk' Nuclear Plants In ESPS** - 7/25/14 - EPA is facing growing pressure from industry, states and members of Congress to reshape the mechanism it uses to encourage "at-risk" nuclear stations to stay open as part of the agency's landmark greenhouse gas (GHG) standards for the existing power fleet. <http://cleanenergyreport.com/201407252477821/Clean-Energy-Report-Daily-News/News/epa-faces-increasing-calls-to-address-at-risk-nuclear-plants-in-esps/menu-id-202.html>

## Press Releases:

Link to all R7 press releases: <http://go.usa.gov/Qx5>

*Example:* **EPA Determines 99 Missouri Water Bodies Should Be Protected for Recreation** - 5/1/08 - Contact: Martin Kessler, 7236

## Fact Sheets:

Link to all R7 fact sheets: <http://www.epa.gov/region7/factsheets>

*Example: Time-Critical Removal Action, Chemco Industries, Inc., Superfund Site, Topeka, Kansas - 2/8/08 - Contact: Belinda Young, 7463*

### **Upcoming Administrator/RA Events:**

\* New additions noted with an asterisk

**7/28/14** – Tribal Visit, Kickapoo Tribe, Horton, Kan. Contact: Lynn Slugantz, 7883

**7/29/14** – Tribal Visit, Winnebago Tribe, Winnebago, Neb., Contact: Lynn Slugantz, 7883

**7/29-30/14** – Regional Tribal Operations Committee Meeting, Niobrara, Neb. Contact: Lynn Slugantz, 7883

**\*7/29/14** - Tribal Visit, Omaha Tribe, Macy, Neb. Contact: Lynn Slugantz, 7883

**7/31/14** – Missouri Environmental & Energy Conference at the Lake, Osage Beach, Mo. Contact: David Cozad, 7587

**8/6/14** - St. Louis Regional Chamber of Commerce Meeting, St. Louis, Mo. Contact: David Bryan, 7433

**8/11/14** – Clean Power Plan Forum with Utility Executives, Kansas City, Mo. Contact: Mary Peterson, 7882

**8/13/14** – Iowa Association of Business & Industry, Des Moines, Iowa. Contact: Dave Bryan, 7433

**\*8/14/14** - Agricultural Outreach, Sedalia, Mo. Contact: Kris Lancaster, 7557

**\*9/3/14** - Nancy Stoner and Mike Shapiro Visit R7, Regional Office. Contact: Karen Flournoy, 7782

**\*9/10/14** - Kansas City Steel Redevelopment/Walmart Grand Opening, Kansas City, Kan. Contact: Ben Washburn, 7364

**\*9/10/14** - HHS Senior Leadership Meeting, Kansas City, Mo. Contact: Kris Lancaster, 7557

### **DRA:**

**8/20/14** – Tribal Consultation Training, Regional Office. Contact: Heather Hamilton, 7039

### **RA/Immediate Office**

None

### **Other Events**

### **AWMD**

None

### **CNSL**

None

**ECO/EJ**

None

**ENSV**

None

**PLMG**

None

**RA/OPA**

**9/29-30/14** - Healthy Schools Outreach, Missouri School Plant Managers' Association Conference, Four Seasons, Lake of the Ozarks, Mo. Contact: Kathleen Fenton, 7874 and Harry Diesel, 7382

**SUPR**

None

**WWPD**

**8/18-21/14** – Purdue Pesticide Program Certification and Training Workshop, Indianapolis, Ind. Contact: Douglas Jones, 7592

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**Des Moines Register**

**Editorial: Iowa needs to explore alternate energy sources**

7/28/14

Iowa long ago committed to moving aggressively toward encouraging development of renewable energy, and it seemed Iowa's regulated utilities had embraced this movement. Recent events suggest otherwise, however.

Regulated utilities have lately exhibited concern that this enthusiasm for alternative energy may threaten their monopoly status. And they have asserted themselves in defense of their turf.

The Associated Press reported that the Branstad administration pulled the plug on a \$1 million federal grant to develop policies to speed adoption of solar energy. Electric utilities lobbied for changes in the grant in an effort to prevent the money being used to promote the benefits of solar energy without pointing out the limitations. After the U.S. Department of Energy objected to the changes, state and federal officials agreed to end the grant.

Earlier, two Iowa public utilities and a power cooperative association sought to block Dubuque from entering into an agreement to buy electricity generated by a private company that installed photovoltaic solar collectors on a city maintenance facility. That argument, which was endorsed by the Iowa Utilities Board, was rejected by the Iowa Supreme Court in a July 11 ruling.

These signs of protectionism by Iowa utilities that have a state-approved monopoly raise questions about whether this state may run into a brick wall in encouraging free-market development of alternative energy production.

Solar, wind and other renewal fuels by definition offset electricity generated by coal and natural gas. So utility companies that rely heavily on those fuels are understandably concerned about protecting their investment in power generation and distribution. But that should not come at the expense of developing clean and renewable energy sources.

The withdrawal of the solar grant is troubling because it suggests some utility companies may be quietly working to undermine development of solar power, which would not be in the state's interests. The Iowa Environmental Council estimates Iowa has the potential to produce up to 20 percent of its electric needs with energy from the sun using rooftop collectors alone. Nothing should stand in the way of achieving that goal.

The issue before the Iowa Supreme Court cut to the heart of the regulated utilities' challenge in the face of growing alternatives. Iowa law grants monopoly status to large producers and distributors of energy to avoid duplication of huge investments in power plants, transmission lines and gas pipelines.

In the Dubuque case, Eagle Point Solar agreed to install solar panels on the city building and sell electricity to the city. Interstate Power and Light, the Iowa Association of Electric Cooperatives and MidAmerican Energy argued that by selling power rather than just solar collectors Eagle Point was in effect a "public utility," encroaching on Interstate Power's territory.

It is fair for regulated utilities to defend against encroachment by competitors acting as "public utilities," but it was a stretch to see a serious threat in an agreement that provided only part of the energy needs of one building.

For the foreseeable future, this state will need to grant monopolies to public utilities that have the resources to invest in infrastructure and generating capacity to serve the bulk of energy demand. But at the margins, the free market will continue to chip away at the amount of energy produced by fossil fuels and replace it with conservation and renewable fuels.

The challenge for the Iowa Legislature, Iowa Utilities Board and the courts is to protect public utilities that provide base load energy while encouraging transition to alternative energy sources that do not pollute the air and water or generate greenhouse gases.

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**Wall Street Journal**

## **Report Says EPA Fails to Stem Methane Gas Emissions From Pipelines** **Inspector General Says Voluntary Program to Spur Energy Companies to Address Leaks Is No Help**

By AMY HARDER CONNECT

Updated July 25, 2014 6:56 p.m. ET

The Environmental Protection Agency is failing to control leaks of methane, a potent greenhouse gas, from the nation's natural-gas pipelines, the agency's inspector general said Friday.

A report calls on the EPA to do more to control inadvertent emissions of methane, which has a more intense—though shorter—warming effect on the planet than carbon dioxide, the agency said. Natural gas consists almost entirely of methane.

About \$192 million of natural gas was lost in 2011 because of leaks in pipelines, known as distribution lines, that transport the fuel to end users, the inspector general said. That cost was borne by consumers, according to the report.

The inspector general said a voluntary EPA program to encourage energy companies to address methane emissions hasn't helped to reduce leaks.

The nation's plentiful supplies of natural gas are a central part of President Barack Obama's strategy to address climate change, since burning natural gas for energy produces 50% less in carbon emissions than burning coal. U.S. carbon emissions have fallen in recent years, in part due to natural gas supplanting coal in electricity generation.

But the methane component of natural gas has prompted criticism of wider natural-gas use from environmentalists and some Democratic lawmakers, who say that because of the widespread leaks, gas may not be much better than coal when it comes to global warming. There are no comprehensive federal data on how much methane is emitted when natural gas is first produced and when it is transported through pipelines.

The report recommends that the EPA coordinate better with the federal Pipeline and Hazardous Materials Safety Administration and help ensure that companies have financial incentives to repair leaks and replace older pipelines. The EPA doesn't currently regulate methane emissions from distribution pipelines, and the agency's inspector general can't compel it to do so. The Obama administration is expected to decide later this year whether to write new EPA regulations targeting methane.

Distribution pipelines emit about a fifth of all the methane that seeps from the nation's natural-gas systems, including production fields where gas is pumped out of the ground, according to an April study by the EPA.

"We're making strides to collect data, and we've established a substantial understanding of the sector's technical, policy and economic issues in order to achieve real, tangible methane-emissions reductions," EPA spokeswoman Liz Purchia said.

The American Gas Association, which represents more than 200 natural-gas utilities that own and operate distribution pipelines, declined to comment on the report but said efforts already under way by its members have helped reduce methane emissions 22% since 1990.

"A concerted effort by natural-gas utilities to upgrade and modernize our nation's pipeline network to enhance safety has also contributed significantly to a declining trend in emissions from the natural-gas system," AGA spokesman Jake Rubin said.

—Cassandra Sweet contributed to this article.